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ABC OF CONFERENCE

ADDRESS - one to many

BRIEFING - one to a small group

CONVERSATION - one to one,
where **serious** matters are discussed.

It requires

AUDITORY (Listening)

ARTICULATORY (Speaking) skills.

You acquire them by practising first in
conversation, then in
briefing and finally in
public speaking sessions.

This booklet comes to your **AID**. It

creates **Awareness**

stimulates **Interest**

generates **Desire**

to improve your listening and
speaking skills through systematic practice.

CONFERENCE MAKETH A READY MAN

Mentally alert and always ready to

SHARE

Sincerely

Honestly

Apprise with

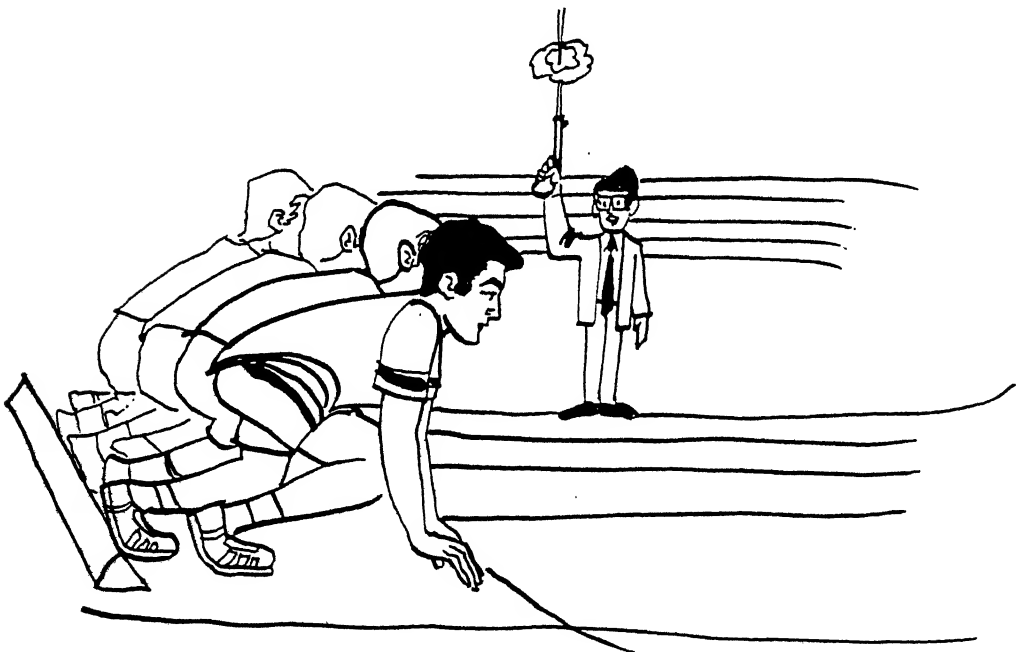
Reason and

Emotion

your experiences with others or learn from others' experiences or influence others.

You must be **ready** to share even your fears, anxieties, and doubts in an open atmosphere.

To be **READY** you need **Auditory** and **Articulatory** skills.



ONE TO ONE - a conversation.

In **FACT** the most intimate and effective interaction is a conversation which is

Face to face

Authentic

Candid

Two way

This is a **FACT** borne out of experience.



* **Face to face:** Sitting together for a conversation is not enough. You must have eye contact maintained throughout the period it lasts. Often you are not aware that you both are not looking at each other.

Looking away sends negative signals to the other.

Be aware of this tendency and correct it diligently.

* **Authentic:** Be trust-worthy and factual. You may have a tendency to hide feelings and withhold information. The other person may do like wise. Then the whole discourse will be a wasteful exercise.

* **Candid:** Frank and unbiased opinions guarantee results in due course.

* **Two way:** Without feedback, communication is incomplete. When you speak, you must know whether the other person has understood and is ready to accept or not whatever you say.

ANCIENT WISDOM

Beginning of a discourse.

How should a serious discourse begin?



For a good beginning, the best illustration comes from the Teacher-Disciple tradition. It begins with a peace invocation.

*“Om Sahana Vavatu Sahana
bhunaktu
Sahaviryam karavava hai
Tejesvina
Vadhita mastu
Ma vidivisa va hai
Om Santi Santi Santi hi”.*

May He protect us both together. May He nourish us both together.

*May we **work together** with great energy*

*May our study be vigorous and **insightful***

*May we **not dispute** (no ill feelings).*

Let there be Peace, Peace, Peace.

Working together for
Insights with
No disputes

This practice has two-fold significance:

- a) Prayer at the beginning.
- b) Meaning of the Prayer.

The first is to set the mind. The second is to **WIN**.

CULTURE & TRADITION

SET a design for opening and closing. Social - Emotional - Topical.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL OPENING

At home you are governed
by culture.

You are **WARM** to visitors,

- * **WELCOMING**
- * **ATTENDING**
- * **RECEIVING**
- * **MAKING ENQUIRIES**



At office you have to shape a culture of
CARE to the visitor.

- * **COMFORT** - make him comfortably seated.
- * **APPRISE** - tell him that you have time to spare.
- * **RAPPORT** - build rapport for harmony.
- * **ENCOURAGEMENT** - encourage him to be free and frank.

**YOUR LOAN APPLICATION IS
REJECTED. YOU CAN
TAKE IT BACK**



After a brief social and emotional opening, open the
topic for discussion gradually and deliberately.

Epitome of opening :

Social - Hello.

Emotional - Nice to see you.

Topical - What can I do for you?

Closing is in the reverse order - Topical,
Emotional and Social.

A doctor could close by saying

- Take this medicine.
- You will be all alright.
- Bye.

THE MIDDLE ORDER

It is a See-Saw. By turns you listen and speak while the other does *vice versa*.

Listening is an **ACTIVE** process.

ATTENTION - attention is made visible through eye contact, facial

expressions, gestures and para language - Mm, Yah *etc.*

COMPLETENESS - listen completely without evaluation of what is stated.

TOLERANCE - listen with a spirit of tolerance and consideration.

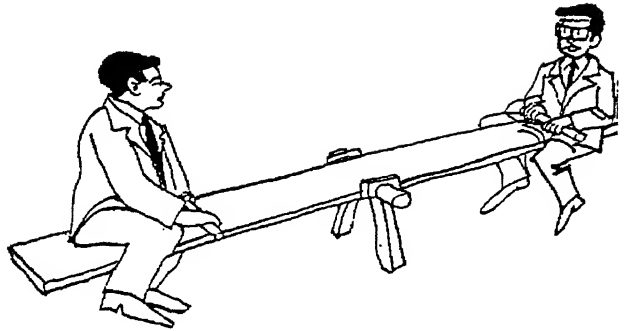
INFORMATION - in the jumble of signals, non-verbal and verbal, there is vital information, the raw material for discussion.

You have to listen intently to it.

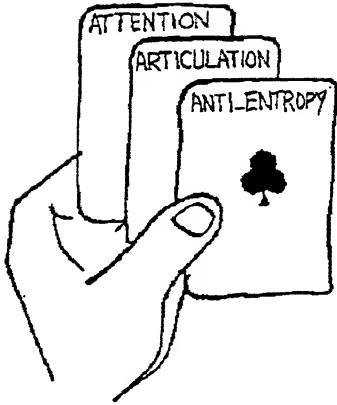
VALIDATE - confirm by para phrasing, what the other has said.

You can say a word of sympathy wherever necessary.

EMPATHY - to empathise-step into other's shoes - an intellectual identification with other person which will help better understanding.



THREE ACES OF SPEAKING



Attention. For RAPT attention
Refer to the non-verbal cues,
Ask questions like : 'Are you with me?' or
Pause for the wandering mind to return or
Terminate the conversation.

But don't articulate when attention is not ensured.
Children are good at it. You can learn by observing them.

Articulation is two fold :

- Vocal articulation.
- Ideas articulation.

There is **MUSIC** in vocal articulation;
Manner of
Uttering
Sounds with
Intonation &
Clarity.

Intonation is voice modulation for
effect and for relief from monotony. You can learn
from TV and Radio commentaries.

However you can note to
SPEAK with

LOOK ... LOOK



- Sustained exhalation for continuity,
- Proper pace, pause, and pitch for intonation,
- Echo from throat, mouth, and nasal cavities for resonance and audibility,
- Agility of tongue, lips, and jaw for fluency and correct pronunciation,
- Keep cool lest you should mutter, stutter or stammer.



IDEAS ARTICULATION

Ideas articulation has several dimensions, the most important are hidden in ARTICLE. If you are good at all of them and use them you will be more effective and successful.

Asking questions is an important segment of any discussion. Ask open questions like 'When will you be able to complete the work?' will permit the other freedom to answer, and he is likely to be authentic. Instead a closed question like 'Will you complete by evening?' elicits YES or NO. Don't ask intimidating questions or put him on the dock.

He will then, become defensive and is likely to be dishonest or evasive in his replies. The purpose of discussion - arriving at truth - will be defeated.



Reality. Speak real, speak concrete. Mind retains the concrete reality and forgets the abstract. Even if you have to speak the abstract give concrete examples.

Test the inference. Mind is an inference machine. It leaps to conclusions. You have to test it with possible rebuttals and validate it with further back up evidence.

Information & Clarification. Giving and seeking both information and clarification, form a considerable part of any discussion. You must know how to do it with clarity.

Level up. In any on going discussion there is a tendency for one to become dogmatic and disapproving while the other submissive - accepting or avoiding. That is one is speaking from higher level, with 'I am OK you are not OK' -feelings. Best way to level up is to speak with data and speak from facts.

Experience sharing. Sharing experiences and emotions makes the interaction a memorable one.

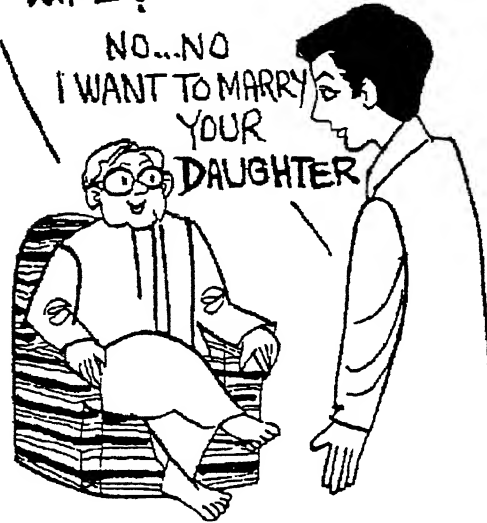
ANTI-ENTROPY

Entropy is disorder. Like everything in nature a discourse can also run down. You have to work in the opposite direction in order to maintain it. What **MARS** a discourse is

I WANT TO MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER

HAVE YOU SEEN
MY WIFE?

NO...NO
I WANT TO MARRY
YOUR
DAUGHTER



Meaning of what is said
is not clear

Apathy - loss of interest

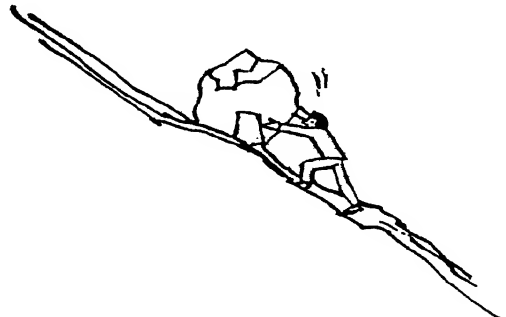
Referents not being
identified properly
Sign language confusion.

'Referents' require elaboration. When you speak you keep referring to things, events, ideas or people. If you don't take care to see that the listener is identifying the same referents you are referring, then there will be utter confusion at the end.

Sign language can be equally confusing. A smile could mean YES or NO. One can laugh with you, laugh at you, laugh down or laugh away.

Taking due care of all the four types of confusions leading to entropy, you've to **WIND** up.

- **WARM** up against apathy
- **INSURE** against confusion of referents
- **NIP** in the bud sign - deception
- **DEFINE** wherever necessary.



BRIEFING - one to a small group.

From conversation you graduate to 'briefing'. You build upon what you have picked up through effective conversation.

Be APT. Audience, Purpose, Technique. Be aware of your audience who in most cases are your team members. Be aware of your purpose. Bear in mind the actions you want them to do or results you want to achieve. Accordingly decide your technique.

Technique includes your style, language, visuals and gadgets you use. Gone are the days when you can instruct people and get things done. You have to involve, inform, invite their suggestions, and doubts, and influence them.

Your objective is to see that they accept your ideas and act on them.

Attention to all

You have to continue individual attention and collective gaze in a briefing, a habit you have to cultivate. Again it may not come naturally. You have to work for it.



ARTICULATE TO ALL

You articulate to all. The message you are giving is to the group for team work. Yet you have to convince each one of them. You have to draw, particularly, the sceptics into discussion. At the same time, you can take support of the opinion leaders as resource persons. Your members have their fears, anxieties, doubts and suspicions. You have to clear them.

Briefing is the most concrete aspect of leadership. You have to do it with **GRACE**.

Gatekeeping You act as a gatekeeper of communications.

You keep the gates open for all to express their views.

At times you may have to close it to control the session.

Reconcile the seemingly opposite view-points for a general agreement.

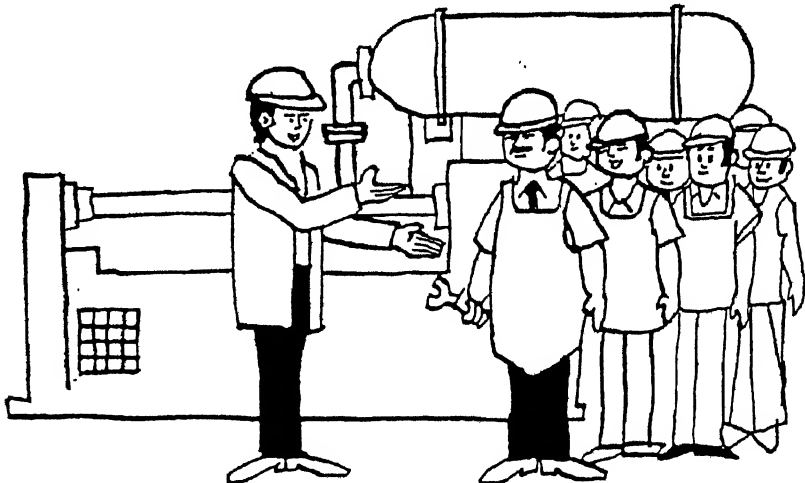
Assert your authority as the leader.

Control the direction and speed of discourse. Finally

Energise or enthuse the members. Articulate exciting possibilities.

Speak of rewards and punishments.

The purpose of energising is to drive out apathy. That is anti-entropic work indeed.



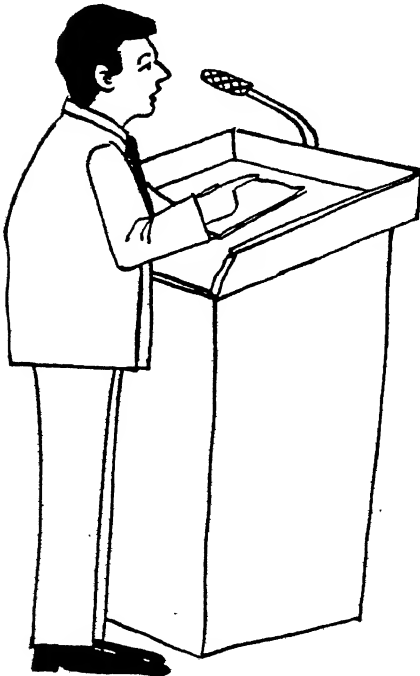
ADDRESS - one to many.

Public speaking is public service.

If this is your motto, then you will be a successful speaker.

Once you get over your initial, natural, stage-fear you have to really work hard to perfect the most sought after and satisfying skill.

Many people remain at mediocre level or even become public bores because they do not develop the skill systematically. I have codified public speaking into three little phrases:



STAND UP

to be seen,

SPEAK UP

to be heard,

SHUT UP

to sit down.



STANDUP :

Stance. Think, Audience-contact, No-apology
Delivery, unassuming, promptness.

Stance Your debonair, poise, and position from the movement you begin to walk up to the podium, till you begin the address matters a great deal. Your dress is equally important. 'Apparel oft proclaims the man' Shakespeare wrote. It holds good even to this day. The rule is, 'go by the audience expectations.'

Use always the podium, on which you can keep your papers. You can hide most of your body behind it. Hiding the body is important because your body movement can distract the attention of the audience. For audience's attention you need to show only your expressive face and hands for appropriate gestures.

Think of opening sentences. Well chosen and well articulated opening utterances help relieve you from the tension. For the release from tension, you need to exhale. As you utter you exhale.

HOW DO YOU BEGIN ?

Begin with proper salutation like 'Mr. President, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, is good enough for most occasions. Although it is customary to mention the names, designations and titles of VIPs on the dais, they are redundant from the audience angle. At times you might mix up and mess up the whole salutation. A bad beginning!

Thank the organizers and the audience for the opportunity. Remember to thank the introducer. Although you may come prepared, pick up something from what he said. For this purpose you have to listen carefully to what the introducer is saying. You can even start with something he has omitted to say about you.

Audience-Contact. Don't be a stiff-neck! Turn freely and naturally your head from left to right. Maintain the rhythmic movement. Don't stare at few faces and embarrass them. Refer to your papers now and then but don't read from them.



NO APOLOGY

Apologising for coming late or not preparing is not going to improve the rapport with your audience. On the other hand if you begin your address without any further delay it will be appreciated by them.

Delivery Your voice, your pronunciation, modulation and intonation constituting the delivery, is the most neglected part. There is considerable scope for improvement in this area. It demands hardwork and diligent rehearsals. Standing before a mirror or friends and practising is not uncommon to many great speakers. There is no reason why you can't do it.



Now-a-days there is professional help available for those who want to develop their voice culture. Alternatively, you can listen to Radio and T.V. documentaries with particular reference to pronunciation, intonation, modulation and speed. (Refer to acronym 'SPEAK' on page 7).

Unassuming. You should begin with confidence and yet display humility. You can speak of your strengths and also about the limitation of what you are going to speak.

Promptness. Long introduction is a curse to the audience. Begin the topic promptly. That is what your audience expect from you.



SPEAK UP

Survey and
Preparation,
Establish credibility,
Audience Acceptance,
Keep the perspective,
Use of gadgets and Anecdotes,
Persuasion.



*If I've to speak with time limit, then I need time to prepare
if there is no time limit, I'm ready now.*

Survey and Preparation. If public speaking is public service, then you have to do justice to each engagement. Your audience come for enrichment, sparing their valuable time. Hence preparation is very essential. It may be necessary to survey the literature on the subject, the latest on it. The degree of survey and preparation may vary according to audience, purpose, and time. Time for preparation and time allotted to make the speech, both are important for the survey and preparation.

The actual preparation involves writing down the speech (for the principles of writing refer to the booklet 'Writing maketh an exact man').

Establish credibility. The audience-attention is the goal here. Credibility and importance of the topic to the audience have to be established to make them attentive. Next, establish your competence to talk on the subject. Your experience and knowledge form your competence. At the same time, acknowledge that there are many in the audience who have something to say on the subject. But the uniqueness you bring to bear on your speech is your own experience and opinions. Usually the introducer has to do this. If he fails, which is true in most cases, you have to establish the credibility of the topic and your competence yourself.

AUDIENCE-ACCEPTANCE

The entire body of the speech is aimed at audience-acceptance of your opinions. Your reasoning must be perfect.

Your speech contains facts, assumptions and your opinions. Your audience must accept them as such. When you state facts, quote the sources. Authenticity becomes important.

To make assumptions valid is more difficult. Sometimes you are not conscious of the assumptions you make. Assumptions are bridges between facts and opinions. They have to be articulated and validated. What you take for granted may not be taken for granted by all in the audience. You will have to argue; give reasoning and validate it. There is the advantage in writing down. You can ask yourself whether the audience would accept the statement readily or not. If not, you can support it with warranties, bring out possible rebuttals and back it up with evidence like the way a lawyer does. Ultimately what your audience want is your opinions, supported by verifiable facts, evidence and valid assumptions.



KEEP THE PERSPECTIVE

You present your speech as a coherent whole, not as disjointed pieces. You have to tie your ideas together. This is another reason why you should write down your speech. There are many things, many angles, many perspectives to each topic. Keeping the audience, purpose, and time in view you have to cut the coat.

Don't stray away from the central theme. Even if you have to digress a little, come back quickly to the main stream.

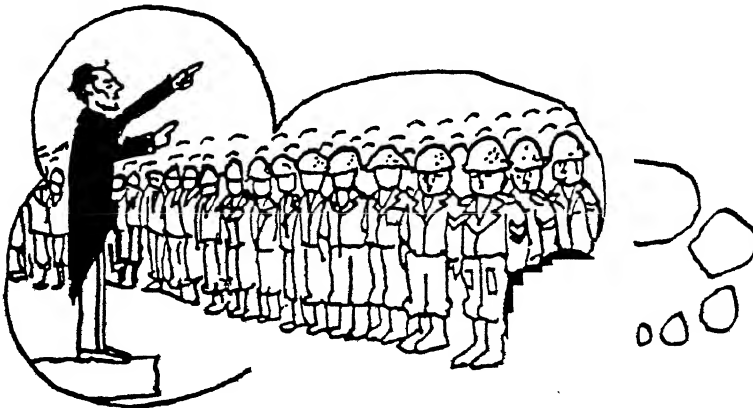
Use anecdotes and gadgets. Your anecdote may not digress the audience-attention. They have to be CRISP. :

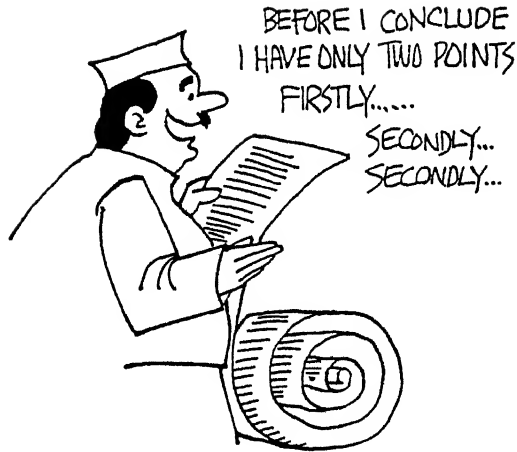
Credible, Relevant, Interesting, Simple, Punch.

Use of gadgets like slides, public address system can mar the whole show if care is not taken. Every speaker must be ready for the contingencies with alternatives. While showing the slides what you speak should be consistent with what you are showing. In case you need to digress, switch off the slide projector.

Persuasion. In the ultimate analysis, public service is incomplete if you don't persuade people into acceptance and possible actions. For this remember you have to combine your reasoning with emotional appeal.

Gettysburg speech of Abraham Lincon is an example worth remembering.





SHUT UP

(SUM UP, HARK BACK, USE OF ANECDOTES
THANK, UNASSUMING AND PROMPTNESS).

SUM UP. Never end the speech abruptly. However, small the speech might be, it must contain a summing up. This is necessary for refreshing the memory of the audience. Also, the last few statements are what they carry home. Again, writing the speech helps in preparing a short summary.

HARK BACK. Go back to the main points made earlier to pick up the trail. It is better if you can recall and reiterate the exact sentences.

USE OF ANECDOTES. You can choose a small and simple anecdote or a famous quotation or a proverb or a catchy phrase or an acronym. You can make an emotional appeal at this stage with a telling effect.

THANK Thank them again. If you had thanked the audience and organisers for the opportunity at the beginning, do it for the satisfying and memorable day at the end. Do it with gratitude writ on your face.

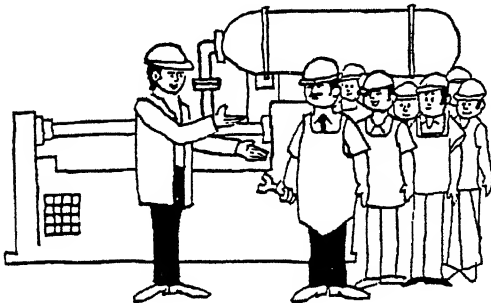
UNASSUMING and **PROMPTLY** sit down, the way you began the speech. Having said what you wanted to say, never linger longer than necessary. There are many things you might have left off. Never mind. Don't go back again, once you have begun to sum up. Promptly shut up and win the laurels.

CONCLUSION

Conference makes you a
ready man
for all occasions :
Formal address,
informal briefing,
and intimate conversations.



Firstly, convert your drawing room or office room into a nursery where you can nurture your auditory and articulating skills in daily one to one interactions.



Secondly, instead of using a trusted lieutenant to instruct your or team mates do it yourself in briefing sessions so as to lead them with GRACE!

Finally, look around for
opportunities to stand up
and speak up knowing
full well when to shut up.

